



Texas Honors Its Brightest Environmental Stars – 2008 Texas Environmental Excellence Award Winners

For the past 14 years, the TCEQ has honored the good works of Texas citizens, communities, and organizations on behalf of the Texas environment. This year is no exception. The award

winners are as diverse as the state

itself—representing a variety of industries, economic sectors, and age groups.

The winners—recommended by the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Selection Committee and approved by the TCEQ commissioners and Governor Perry—were honored at a banquet during the Environmental Trade Fair and Conference held at the Austin Convention Center on April 30.

The winners are highlighted below. For their complete stories and to view the video, visit <www.teca.org>.



Innovative Technology Texas Instruments Incorporated and Matros Technologies

A partnership between two forward-thinking companies has contributed to cleaner air for a challenged region—the Dallas–Fort Worth area. Texas Instruments’ (TI) North Campus in Dallas

and Matros Technologies found new ways to reduce emissions from volatile organic compounds while also reducing fuel use and the resultant emissions of nitrogen oxides by devising an industry-specific catalyst. In fuel costs alone, it saved TI almost \$900,000 a year, but more importantly, cut emissions by 45 percent and eliminated the disposal of 136 tons of packing material every four years.



Large Business/Technical The University of Texas at Austin

With more than 50,000 students, the University of Texas is larger than many cities. Over the past decade, the University’s Austin campus has increased its overall square footage by 13 percent, and electrical demands

have grown by almost twice that rate. The UT power plant has met this rising need with a minimal change in fuel

consumption. Engineers accomplished this through a variety of measures, including a boiler retrofit that cuts emissions and optimizes electric motor use. The plant also uses an innovative “real time” dispatch model that precisely manages the use of stand-by equipment.

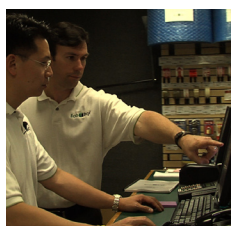
The success of this decade-long effort has positioned the plant to serve not only the university, but also the surrounding community that it calls home—because the benefits of clean air have no boundaries.



Large Business/ Nontechnical Kent Moore Cabinets, Ltd.

This Brazos Valley manufacturer of residential and commercial wooden cabinetry invested more than \$6 million to develop a new way of finishing the finely crafted creations it has built for

almost 30 years. Kent Moore Cabinets adopted a unique, water-based, ultra-low volatile organic compound finish for their cabinets, reducing emissions from 101 tons in 2003 to just 1 ton in 2006. In addition, using the water-based finish generates approximately 80 percent less hazardous waste than using the solvent-based finish. Kent Moore’s innovative technology has clearly paid off for the environment.



Small Business Eco Box

When the move is over and the new home is settled or the business opens its doors to the public, there’s often one final challenge...what to do with all the moving boxes. With the demand for used boxes growing so much in the

last 10 years, Eco Box is now buying and selling high-quality, used boxes to companies, businesses, and the public throughout the state. The company found a niche market in buying boxes from companies responsibly ridding their storerooms of boxes accumulated from logo redesigns, graphic-printing mistakes, liquidation of inventory, and computer installation upgrades. Over the past decade, Eco Box has bought and sold more than 500,000 used boxes that otherwise might have ended up in the landfill. Now that’s closing the loop!



Government

City of McAllen, Recycling Center

An innovative partnership between a Rio Grande Valley city and local businesses is helping cut waste and enrich local crops by closing the recycling loop. Under this concept, old fruits, vegetables, and food scraps

are collected, composted, and sold back to area farmers and residents for use on crops and lawns. Called the “Save the Greens” program, the City of McAllen has produced more than 6,800 cubic yards of compost since Save the Greens started in December 2006. That compost total is expected to rise dramatically over the next several years as the program expands. The city has also partnered with other Rio Grande Valley cities, the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, and the Sustainable Agro-nomic Education Association to teach low-income families to grow their own food organically, form a cooperative-farmers’ market, and promote organic-growing practices.



Civic/Nonprofit

Bahia Grande Restoration Partnership

Through the coordinated efforts of more than 75 businesses, private individuals, and government partners, desolate wetlands are coming back to life. The Bahia Grande land tract sprawls over 21,000 acres in

southeastern Cameron County. With the construction of the Brownsville Ship Channel and State Highway 48, the Bahia Grande basin was gradually cut off from the marine waters it needed to flourish.

The Conservation Fund, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service banded together to buy the property. Scientists studied the area and devised a plan to intentionally flood 10,000 acres, build greenhouses, and re-establish a coastal estuary lined with 3,000 black mangrove seedlings. Marine organisms have resumed their historical migration patterns and ultimately, the community will gain benefits from rejuvenated bird watching, sport fishing, and beauty along this formerly barren stretch of the Texas coast.



Education

Nueces River Authority

The Nueces River Authority mounted an ambitious effort to preserve and protect the headwaters of the Frio, Sabinal, Leona, Nueces, and West Nueces rivers in South Texas.

The campaign’s centerpiece is a 24-square foot scaled relief model of the Nueces River Basin, which each year educators take to fifth- and sixth-grade classrooms in a five-county area. This hands-on approach enables students to run their fingers over the terrain and literally trace the connections between creeks, rivers, and bays, delivering a powerful message about personal responsibility. Through this effort, educators are empowering a generation by helping them see first-hand how their choices affect the world around them.



Agriculture

Texas Water Resources Institute

While as much as 85 percent of the water in the basin of the Rio Grande River irrigates crops, the area’s population and water demands are growing—as is the threat of water shortages. That risk drove a unique effort by the Texas

Water Resources Institute and other public and private participants to preserve this precious resource through a combination of efforts ranging from education, increased public awareness, and training, to the installation of low-flow toilets. Since 2002, these efforts have saved an estimated 4 million acre-feet of water. In this hot and arid region, a steady supply of fresh water is the only way to ensure a prosperous future.

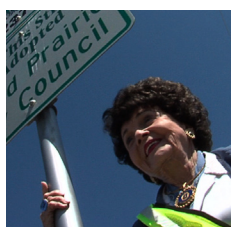


Youth

Josh and Chance Ruder

When Chance Ruder decided to volunteer to help rehabilitate injured birds of prey, he unwittingly found his passion. As Chance rehabilitated birds, his brother Josh stayed by his side filming the birds’ stories and the environmental

challenges they faced. At the young ages of seven and eight, they filmed their first educational video. Now, eight years later, the brothers continue to work tirelessly on behalf of the environment and the creatures they love. By writing a play, producing their own video programs, and collaborating with the Discovery Channel, they continue to raise awareness about endangered species and environmental issues.

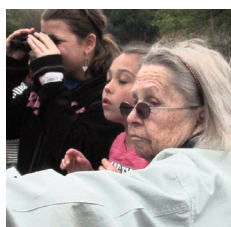


Individual

Mrs. Ruthe Jackson

During her four decades of service to the City of Grand Prairie, 87-year-old Ruthe Jackson has consistently championed environmental education and conservation. For the past 22 years, she’s served on the city council,

fought for curbside recycling, and pioneered the Grand Prairie chapter of Keep Texas Beautiful. She also was the first woman in Texas to receive the National Lady Bird Johnson Award in 1977 for her long-standing dedication to the Grand Prairie park system. In short, Ruthe Jackson personifies the difference one person can make when committed to action—her continuous work over the past 40 years literally has changed the face of Grand Prairie.



Individual

Mrs. Ruby Dillon

At 4’ 9”, Ruby Dillon may be small in stature, but this Richland Hills volunteer stands tall as a community servant. Over the past 20 years, she’s given more than 56,000 hours of volunteer service, and her efforts on

behalf of the environment continually touch new lives. In

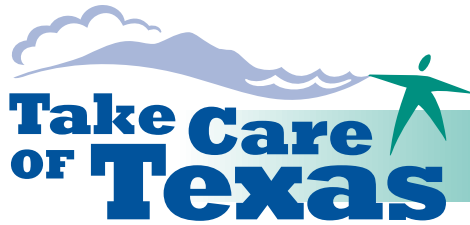
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2007, this 80-year-old dynamo encouraged more than 1,600 young people to participate in environmental camps, fairs, and cleanups. Mrs. Dillon has also helped local Boy Scout and Girl Scout groups fulfill their goals for environmental activities, community service, and volunteerism. She may be best known, however, for her service as the volunteer Executive Director of Keep Richland Hills Beautiful from 1990 to April 2007.

The TCEQ salutes each winner of the 2008 Texas Environmental Excellence Awards.

The 2009 Texas Environmental Excellence Award application will be available online in August at <www.teea.org>. Apply early for the recognition of your environmental project as one of Texas' bright stars!



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